

# Task force reviews fire flow

By Cecilia Chan  
Independent Newspapers

Protecting life and property would improve under a proposed plan to upgrade water pipes and install more than 200 fire hydrants in Sun City and Youngtown.

A task force of water company and fire officials and stakeholders last week reviewed the draft plan that would cost an estimated \$3 million and take four years to implement.

"We have experienced four times the national average in fire fatality because of the age of the population and most fires involved double fatalities," said Fire Chief Jim Sebert of the Sun City Fire Department, which also serves Youngtown. "Our ability to deliver the water we need to control a fire on a residential property is our No. 1 priority. This gives the fire department the ability to perform better and clearly saves lives."

Sun City Assistant Fire Chief Steve Morrow said Sun City homeowners, who already receive one of the lowest rates by the insurance industry, would not see a change in rates due to the improvements but commercial businesses would, how much he did not

## Recommended Fire Flow improvements and estimated costs by year

- Immediate: Sun City and Youngtown pressure reducing-pressure sustaining valve modifications: \$10,000
  - Year One:
    - Youngtown commercial area — 111th Avenue south of Youngtown Avenue: \$65,120
    - Youngtown residential: \$75,840
    - Youngtown — install fire hydrants on existing pipe: \$280,000
    - Sun City — install fire hydrants on existing pipe: \$260,000
  - Year Two:
    - City of Peoria — Paradise Mobile Home Park: \$82,500
    - Sun City residential: \$353,960
    - Youngtown — 6" piping and fire hydrants: \$263,108
  - Year Three:
    - Youngtown — 6" piping and fire hydrants: \$411,848
    - Sun City — 6" piping and fire hydrants: \$291,086
  - Year Four:
    - Youngtown — 6" piping and fire hydrants: \$252,510
    - Sun City — 6" piping and fire hydrants: \$476,976
    - Piping improvements for Youngtown commercial: \$257,154
- Total: \$3.08 million

know.

The Arizona Corporation Commission last June voted to form the Fire-Flow Task Force to study if the two communities with areas of aging infrastructure had sufficient fire protection capacity. The elected board is generally known for regulating public utilities.

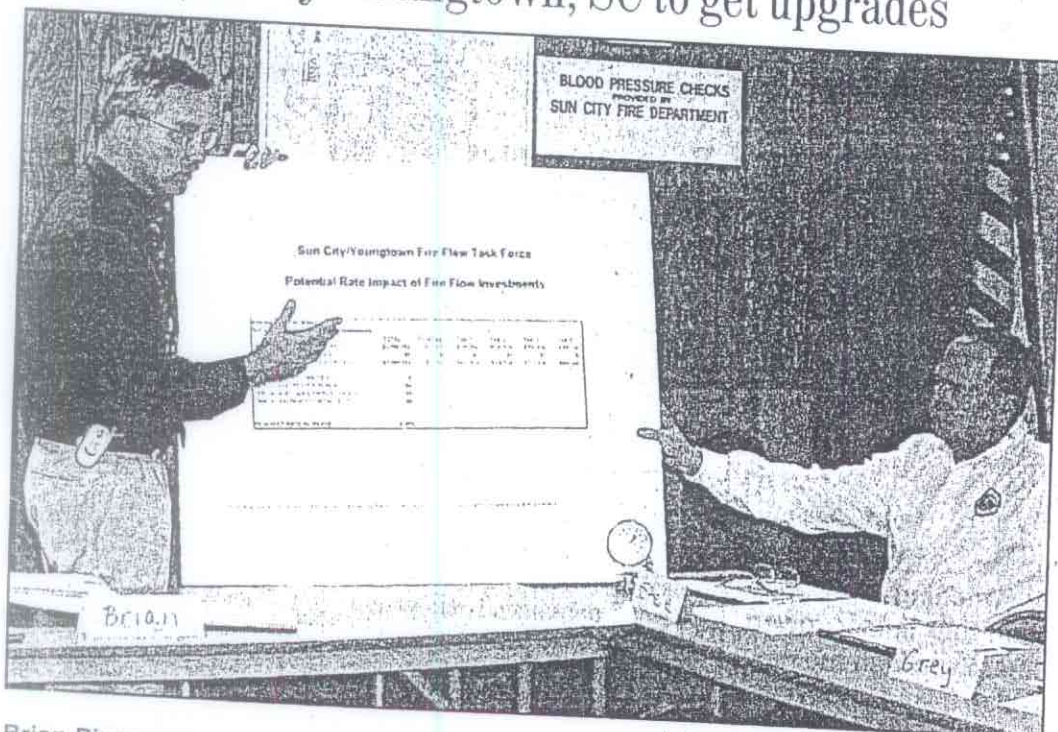
"I had a number of concerns about the water pressure and hydrants," said Corporation Commissioner William Mundell, who sponsored

the amendment creating the task force. "In the past people made the argument the commission should not be concerned about public health and public safety issues. I think it's an important issue that needed to be studied."

Mr. Mundell said he hoped the task force would be a model used throughout the state.

See Flow — Page 10

## Public Safety: Youngtown, SC to get upgrades



Brian Biesemeyer, operations manager for Arizona American Water, shows a rate chart for proposed improvements. To the right is Sun City Fire Assistant Chief Steve Morrow.

Independent Newspapers/Cecilia Chan



# Flow

Continued From Page 1

Marty Rozelle, a consultant for Arizona American Water Co., said a report will be sent to the Commission for review by April 30 as mandated.

The task force studied water production capacity, storage capacity, water lines, water pressure and fire hydrants. Assistant Fire Chief Steve Morrow said storage capacity was adequate but the problem was with the delivery of the water.

Fire flow capacity for residential areas needs to be 1,000 gallons a minute and for business, 1,500 gallons a minute.

The fire flow capacity for two neighborhoods in Youngtown have less than 500 gallons a minute, according to Jennifer Hill with the engineering firm Brown and Caldwell.

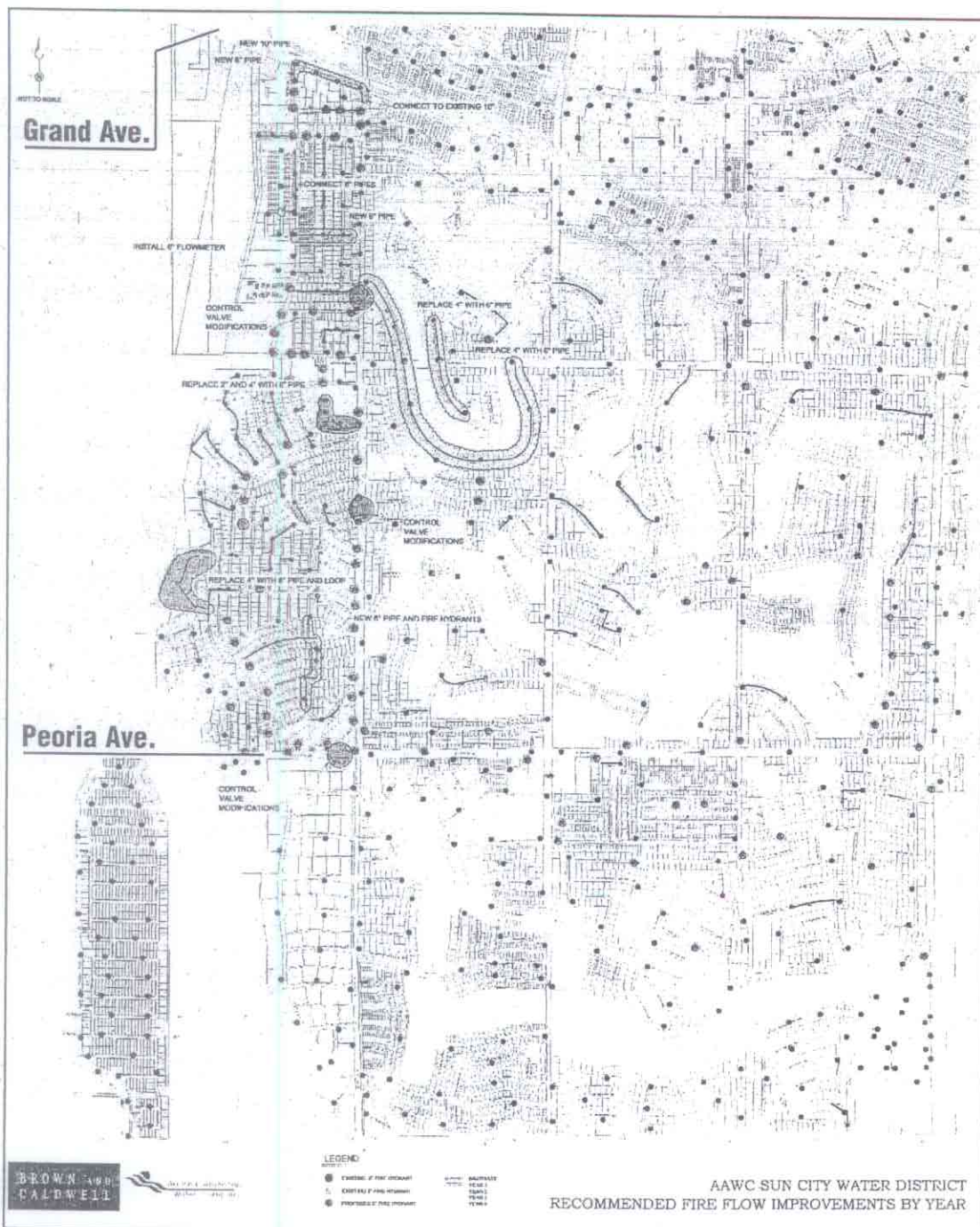
Mr. Mundell questioned what would occur in those two areas should a fire occur.

"We are very concerned about that area," Chief Sebert said. "We feel it is beyond borderline. Five hundred gallons a minute would give us enough to do a quick search and rescue. If a house is more fully engulfed, 500 gallons a minute is very critical in that area."

Youngtown Town Manager Mark Fooks endorsed the plan and asked if the work could be completed in fewer than four years.

Brian Biesemeyer, operations manager for Arizona American Water, said the time table chosen was to minimize tearing up areas for the improvements and ensure a steady flow of funds.

"These are estimates," he



Above, the pink dots represent proposed six-foot fire hydrants. The blue dots represent existing six-foot fire hydrants.

said. "If it is cost effective, we will try to push it up earlier."

Mr. Biesemeyer also assured the group, Arizona American would not divert funds from routine maintenance of its systems for the fire flow project.

"This is in addition and on top of our planned work," he said.

He said the company would need to seek a 6.2 percent rate increase to recoup its costs for the project. He said if Arizona Corporate Commission approves the increase, it would also affect Coyote Lakes residents. He explained to Surprise Fire Chief Mike White, Coyote Lakes met the 1,000 gallons-a-minute criteria and did not need improvements but was part of

the water system.

"Youngtown believes you need to get started on it right away and spend the money right away," Mr. Fooks said. "We expect to pay the appropriate amount of increase to pay for the system. There is no misconception anyone else will pay for this. You spend the money and fix the system and you come to the rate hearing and recover the cost. We'll be down there cheering you instead of booing you."

*Post your comments on this issue at [newsblog.info/0302](http://newsblog.info/0302)*

*News editor Cecilia Chan can be reached at 972-6101 or [cchan@newszap.com](mailto:cchan@newszap.com)*



Independent Newspapers/Cecilia Chan  
Youngtown Town Manager Mark Fooks, left, chats with Arizona Corporation Commissioner William Mundell during a break in last week's task force meeting.